



Request for Letters of Intent – HIE White Space Grant Program

August 16, 2012

Purpose: The Illinois Office of Health Information Technology will award grants to Illinois not-for-profit organizations to provide health information exchange (HIE) service to “white space” health care entities, which are organizations and providers in practice settings and geographic areas currently underserved by HIE services. Up to four (4) proposals will be funded for up to \$500,000 each.

Grants will be awarded to eligible applicants that submit proposals for one of two approaches: 1) connecting white space health care entities to an HIE service/solution that also connects to the Illinois Health Information Exchange (ILHIE) network; or 2) connecting white space entities directly to the ILHIE network. Proposals must include only one of the two approaches and applicants may not submit more than one proposal. The HIE White Space Grant Program encourages and will give priority consideration to applications that include multiple organizations working together to achieve grant deliverables.

“Health information exchange service” as defined in this request for letters of intent is the secure electronic exchange of health information from certified electronic health records systems and structured health data in accordance with nationally recognized technical standards.¹

“White space” health care entities are defined as follows: physician practices with 10 or fewer physicians; community health centers/federally qualified health centers; rural health clinics; long term care facilities; outpatient behavioral health providers; critical access hospitals; and dental practices.

Grantees awarded funding under the HIE White Space Grant Program and participating white space entities will be connected to the ILHIE in a pilot engagement, and will not obligate them to pay user fees to the ILHIE as a condition of participation in the grant program. Grantees and white space entities may, however, elect to enter into a service agreement and begin paying user fees to the ILHIE at any time during or subsequent to the grant period.

Goal: HIE White Space Program grantees will support Illinois’ progress in increasing the utilization of HIE, and specifically of the ILHIE network, to support improved patient care and health outcomes and increase the number of providers able to achieve Meaningful Use under the federal government’s Medicare and Medicaid Electronic Health Records Incentive Programs.

¹ See the Office of the National Coordinator, Security and Interoperability Framework Wiki: <http://wiki.siframework.org>; and Direct Project Wiki: <http://wiki.directproject.org>.



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Program Requirements: HIE White Space Program grantees will be required to:

- connect a minimum of 50 eligible Illinois-licensed health care providers² in a minimum of five (5) unaffiliated³ Illinois white space entities as defined herein. Entities already connected to an applicant's HIE service/solution or the ILHIE network at the time of application do not count toward the minimums
- if the applicant does not propose to utilize ILHIE network service for initial connectivity of white space entities, the applicant must provide Direct-compliant HIE services to all white space entities identified in its proposal within six months of grant award date
- ensure that all white space entities are connected to the ILHIE network within one year of grant award date; connection to the ILHIE network is defined as full operational integration with the ILHIE master directories and other statewide services^{4, 5}
- provide technical assistance and training to health care providers in white space entities to connect them to HIE services and accelerate their utilization of HIE
- submit a work plan within 30 days of notice of award date
- enter into a data sharing agreement with the ILHIE Authority
- enter into a grant agreement with the State of Illinois
- submit quarterly reports

Eligibility Requirements: Eligible applicants must be existing Illinois-based formal or incorporated organizations providing not-for-profit services or functions related to health care, have experience with health information technology, and be classified as a 501(c)3.

Applicants proposing to use an HIE service/solution other than the ILHIE network to initially connect white space entities must provide Direct-compliant HIE services to connected entities.⁶

If an applicant does not plan to utilize ILHIE network services for initial connectivity of white space entities, the applicant must have an operational HIE service/solution in production (test environment not eligible) at the time of application and ability to provide HIE service to connected white space entities throughout the grant period.

² Licensed health care providers eligible to be included in applicant proposal are physicians, advanced practice nurses, registered nurses, physician assistants, dentists, and licensed clinical social workers.

³ Entities that do not share common ownership or control, through corporate governance or contractual arrangements, or that control or are controlled by another entity in the group.

⁴ More information about the master directories and statewide services is available here:

<http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/HIE/Pages/TechArc.aspx>

⁵ Some white space entities (e.g. behavioral health) may be restricted by law from integrating fully into all statewide ILHIE services. Grantees will not be required to ensure that any such entities are connected to any ILHIE services that by law they are restricted from participating in. Specific terms will be incorporated into grant agreements.

⁶ Direct specifications can be obtained at: <http://wiki.directproject.org/>



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Primary Selection Criteria for HIE White Space Program Grantees:

- Applicant can provide Direct-compliant HIE services to white space entities or utilize the ILHIE network to ensure white space entities have Direct-compliant HIE services
- Applicant can assist providers in meeting Meaningful Use requirements for care summary exchange included in the criteria for participation in the Medicare and Medicaid EHR incentive programs⁷
- Applicant or organization that is a partner to the proposed project can demonstrate experience providing technical assistance and training to health care providers to implement or use health information technology, including electronic health records and HIE services/solutions

For Approach #1 Only (non-ILHIE network for initial white space entity HIE connectivity):

- Applicant can connect a minimum of 50 eligible licensed health care providers in a minimum of five (5) unaffiliated white space entities to HIE service/solution within six months of grant award date; AND applicant can connect that HIE service/solution to the ILHIE network within one year of grant award date

For Approach #2 Only (ILHIE network for direct white space entity HIE connectivity):

- Applicant can connect a minimum of 50 eligible licensed health care providers in a minimum of five (5) unaffiliated white space entities to the ILHIE network within one year of grant award date

Required Content: Applicants must address the following questions in the letter of intent.

1. What is the scope of your proposal?
 - What licensed health care providers in which unaffiliated white space entities will you connect to HIE services?
 - Will you use the ILHIE network to initially connect white space entities to HIE services?
 - Will you use an HIE service/solution other than the ILHIE network to initially connect white space entities?
 - a. If so, briefly identify and describe the HIE service/solution
 - b. Verify that the HIE service/solution is Direct-compliant or will be Direct-compliant by the time you will begin connecting white space entities to that service and indicate the date that it will be Direct-compliant
2. If you plan to utilize an HIE service/solution other than the ILHIE network to initially connect white space entities, how will that HIE service/solution connect to the ILHIE?⁸
3. How will you assist connected white space entities to utilize HIE services in the delivery of care?
4. Please provide a summary of your organization's experience (in terms of services and results) in health information technology and working with health care providers
5. Please identify any organizations with which you will partner to execute your proposal

⁷ http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Legislation/EHRIncentivePrograms/downloads/8_Transition_of_Care_Summary.pdf

⁸ Please see the ILHIE Onboarding Handbook for guidance:
http://www2.illinois.gov/gov/HIE/Documents/ILHIEOnBoardingHandbook_v3-5.pdf



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Request for Letters of Intent: Interested applicants are invited to submit a letter of intent, not more than five (5) pages in length. Please include the FEIN of the proposing organization and letters of support from any proposed partners. Letters of intent are due on Friday, September 14, 2012 at 3:00 p.m.

Submissions must be made electronically to:

Mr. Cory Verblen

Communications Manager

Illinois Office of Health Information Technology

Email: cory.verblen@illinois.gov

Next Steps: The submission of a letter of intent qualifies an organization to submit a full application for award, provided that all eligibility requirements are fulfilled. Grant applications will be emailed to all eligible respondents no later than Monday, September 17, 2012. All grant applications will be due on Friday, October 26th at 3:00 p.m.